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The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G. H. Thomas

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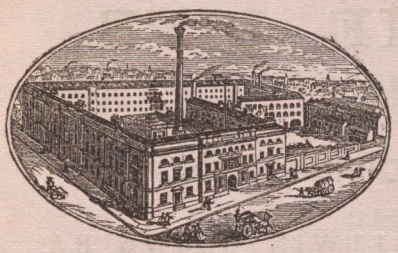

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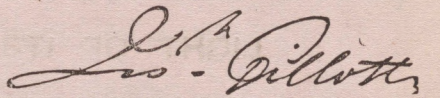

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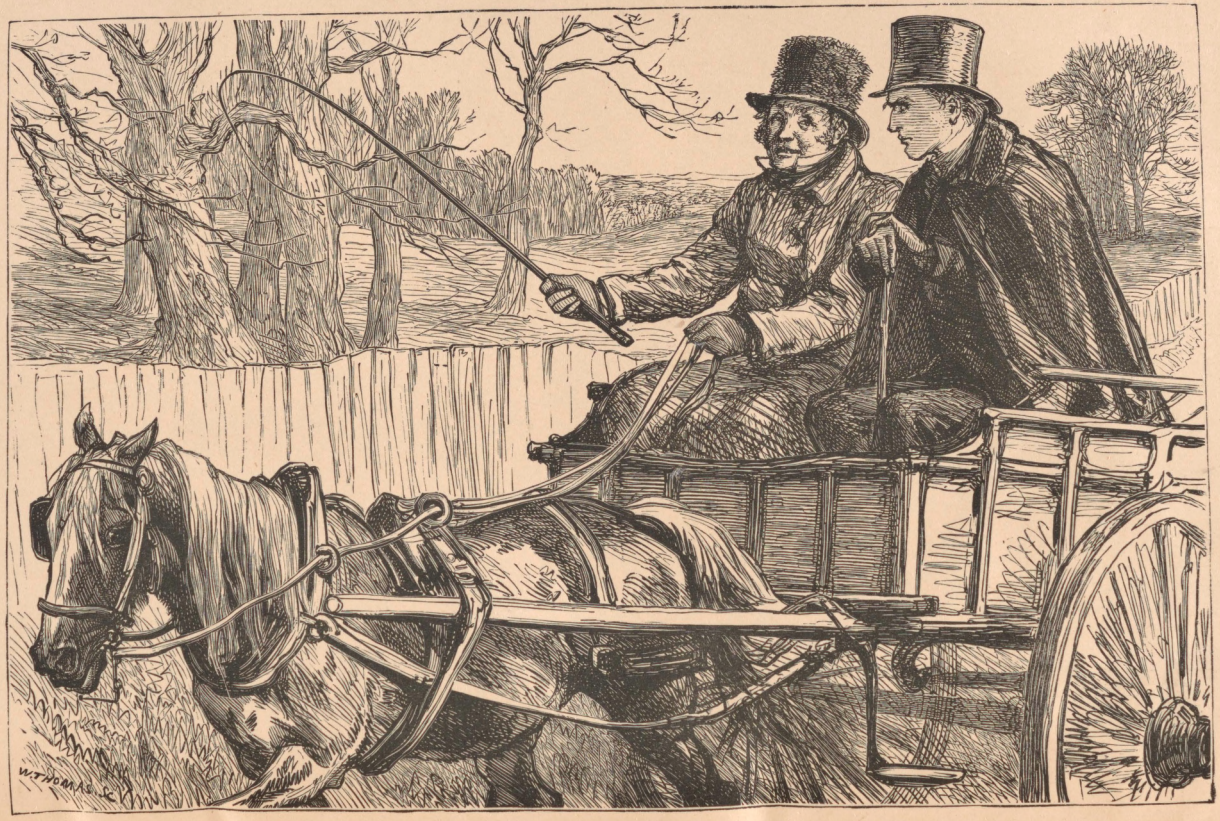
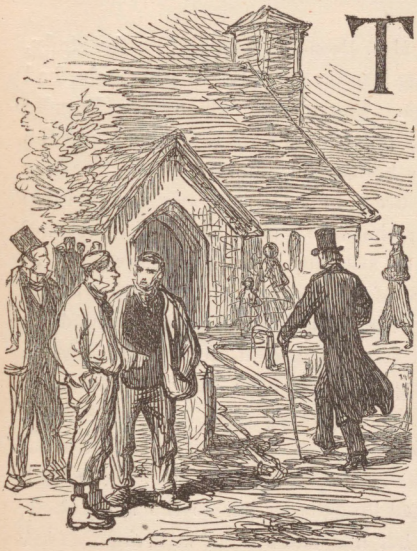


FARMER MANGLE AND MR. CRAWLEY.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. CRAWLEY IS SUMMONED TO BARCHESTER.



THE scene which occurred in Hogglestock church on the Sunday after Mr. Thumble's first visit to that parish had not been described with absolute accuracy either by the archdeacon in his letter to his son, or by Mrs. Thorne. There had been no footman from the palace in attendance on Mr. Thumble, nor had there been a battle with the brickmakers; neither had Mr. Thumble been put under the pump. But Mr. Thumble had gone over, taking his gown and surplice with him, on the Sunday morning, and had intimated to Mr. Crawley his intention of performing the service. Mr. Crawley, in answer to this, had assured Mr. Thumble that he would not be allowed to open his mouth in the church; and Mr. Thumble, not seeing his way to any further successful action, had contented himself with attending the services in his surplice, making thereby a silent protest that he, and not Mr. Crawley, ought to have been in the reading-desk and the pulpit.

When Mr. Thumble reported himself and his failure at the palace, he strove hard to avoid seeing Mrs. Proudie, but not successfully. He knew something of the palace habits, and did manage to reach the bishop alone on the Sunday evening, justifying himself to his lordship for such an interview by the remarkable circumstances of the case and the importance of his late mission. Mrs. Proudie always went to church on Sunday evenings, making a point of hearing three services and three sermons every Sunday of her life. On week-days she seldom heard any, having an idea that week-day services were an invention of the High Church enemy, and that they should therefore be vehemently

discouraged. Services on saints' days she regarded as rank papacy, and had been known to accuse a clergyman's wife, to her face, of idolatry, because the poor lady had dated a letter, St. John's Eve. Mr. Thumble, on this Sunday evening, was successful in finding the bishop at home, and alone, but he was not lucky enough to get away before Mrs. Proudie returned. The bishop, perhaps, thought that the story of the failure had better reach his wife's ears from Mr. Thumble's lips than from his own.

"Well, Mr. Thumble?" said Mrs. Proudie, walking into the study, armed in her full Sunday-evening winter panoply, in which she had just descended from her carriage. The church which Mrs. Proudie attended in the evening was nearly half a mile from the palace, and the coachman and groom never got a holiday on Sunday night. She was gorgeous in a dark brown silk dress of awful stiffness and terrible dimensions; and on her shoulders she wore a short cloak of velvet and fur, very handsome withal, but so swelling in its proportions on all sides as necessarily to create more of dismay than of admiration in the mind of any ordinary man. And her bonnet was a monstrous helmet with the beaver up, displaying the awful face of the warrior, always ready for combat, and careless to guard itself from attack. The large contorted bows which she bore were as a grisly crest upon her casque, beautiful, doubtless, but majestic and fear-compelling. In her hand she carried her armour all complete, a prayer-book, a bible, and a book of hymns. These the footman had brought for her to the study door, but she had thought fit to enter her husband's room with them in her own custody.

"Well, Mr. Thumble!" she said.

Mr. Thumble did not answer at once, thinking, probably, that the bishop might choose to explain the circumstances. But, neither did the bishop say any thing.

"Well, Mr. Thumble?" she said again; and then she stood looking at the man who had failed so disastrously.

"I have explained to the bishop," said he. "Mr. Crawley has been contumacious,—very contumacious indeed."

"But you preached at Hogglestock?"

"No, indeed, Mrs. Proudie. Nor would it have been possible, unless I had had the police to assist me."

"Then you should have had the police. I never heard of anything so mismanaged in all my life,—never in all my life." And she put her books down on the study table, and turned herself round from Mr. Thumble towards the bishop. "If things go on like this, my

lord," she said, "your authority in the diocese will very soon be worth nothing at all." It was not often that Mrs. Proudie called her husband my lord, but when she did do so, it was a sign that terrible times had come;—times so terrible that the bishop would know that he must either fight or fly. He would almost endure anything rather than descend into the arena for the purpose of doing battle with his wife, but occasions would come now and again when even the alternative of flight was hardly left to him.

"But, my dear,——" began the bishop.

"Am I to understand that this man has professed himself to be altogether indifferent to the bishop's prohibition?" said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband and addressing Mr. Thumble.

"Quite so. He seemed to think that the bishop had no lawful power in the matter at all," said Mr. Thumble.

"Do you hear that, my lord?" said Mrs. Proudie.

"Nor have I any," said the bishop, almost weeping as he spoke.

"No authority in your own diocese!"

"None to silence a man merely by my own judgment. I thought, and still think, that it was for this gentleman's own interest, as well as for the credit of the Church, that some provision should be made for his duties during his present,—present—difficulties."

"Difficulties indeed! Everybody knows that the man has been a thief."

"No, my dear; I do not know it."

"You never know anything, bishop."

"I mean to say that I do not know it officially. Of course I have heard the sad story; and, though I hope it may not be the——"

"There is no doubt about its truth. All the world knows it. He has stolen twenty pounds, and yet he is to be allowed to desecrate the Church, and imperil the souls of the people!" The bishop got up from his chair and began to walk backwards and forwards through the room with short quick steps. "It only wants five days to Christmas Day," continued Mrs. Proudie, "and something must be done at once. I say nothing as to the propriety or impropriety of his being out on bail, as it is no affair of ours. When I heard that he had been bailed by a beneficed clergyman of this diocese, of course I knew where to look for the man who would act with so much impropriety. Of course I was not surprised when I found that that person belonged to Framley. But, as I have said before, that is no business of ours. I hope, Mr. Thumble, that the bishop will never be found interfering with the ordinary laws of the land. I am very sure that he will never do so by my advice.

But when there comes a question of inhibiting a clergyman who has committed himself as this clergyman unfortunately has done, then I say that that clergyman ought to be inhibited." The bishop walked up and down the room throughout the whole of this speech, but gradually his steps became quicker, and his turns became shorter. "And now here is Christmas Day upon us, and what is to be done?" With these words Mrs. Proudie finished her speech.

"Mr. Thumble," said the bishop, "perhaps you had better now retire. I am very sorry that you should have had so thankless and so disagreeable a task."

"Why should Mr. Thumble retire?" asked Mrs. Proudie.

"I think it better," said the bishop. "Mr. Thumble, good night." Then Mr. Thumble did retire, and Mrs. Proudie stood forth in her full panoply of armour, silent and awful, with her helmet erect, and vouchsafed no recognition whatever of the parting salutation with which Mr. Thumble greeted her. "My dear, the truth is, you do not understand the matter," said the bishop as soon as the door was closed. "You do not know how limited is my power."

"Bishop, I understand it a great deal better than some people; and I understand also what is due to myself and the manner in which I ought to be treated by you in the presence of the subordinate clergy of the diocese. I shall not, however, remain here to be insulted either in the presence or in the absence of any one." Then the conquered amazon collected together the weapons which she had laid upon the table, and took her departure with majestic step, and not without the clang of arms. The bishop, when he was left alone, enjoyed for a few moments the triumph of his victory.

But then he was left so very much alone! When he looked round about him upon his solitude after the departure of his wife, and remembered that he should not see her again till he should encounter her on ground that was all her own, he regretted his own success, and was tempted to follow her and to apologize. He was unable to do anything alone. He would not even know how to get his tea, as the very servants would ask questions, if he were to do so unaccustomed a thing as to order it to be brought up to him in his solitude. They would tell him that Mrs. Proudie was having tea in her little sitting-room upstairs, or else that the things were laid in the drawing-room. He did wander forth to the latter apartment, hoping that he might find his wife there; but the drawing-room was dark and deserted, and so he wandered back again. It was a grand thing certainly to have triumphed over his wife, and there was a crumb of comfort in the

thought that he had vindicated himself before Mr. Thumble; but the general result was not comforting, and he knew from of old how short-lived his triumph would be.

But wretched as he was during that evening he did employ himself with some energy. After much thought he resolved that he would again write to Mr. Crawley, and summon him to appear at the palace. In doing this he would at any rate be doing something. There would be action. And though Mr. Crawley would, as he thought, decline to obey the order, something would be gained even by that disobedience. So he wrote his summons,—sitting very comfortless and all alone on that Sunday evening,—dating his letter, however, for the following day:—

"REVEREND SIR, Palace, December 20, 186—.

"I HAVE just heard from Mr. Thumble that you have declined to accede to the advice which I thought it my duty to tender to you as the bishop who has been set over you by the Church, and that you yesterday insisted on what you believed to be your right, to administer the services in the parish church of Hogglestock. This has occasioned me the deepest regret. It is, I think, unavailing that I should further write to you my mind upon the subject, as I possess such strong evidence that my written word will not be respected by you. I have, therefore, no alternative now but to invite you to come to me here; and this I do, hoping that I may induce you to listen to that authority which I cannot but suppose you acknowledge to be vested in the office which I hold.

"I shall be glad to see you on to-morrow, Tuesday, as near the hour of two as you can make it convenient to yourself to be here, and I will take care to order that refreshment shall be provided for yourself and your horse.

"I am, Reverend Sir,

"&c. &c. &c.,

"THOS. BARNUM."

"My dear," he said, when he did again encounter his wife that night, "I have written to Mr. Crawley, and I thought I might as well bring up the copy of my letter."

"I wash my hands of the whole affair," said Mrs. Proudie—"of the whole affair!"

"But you will look at the letter?"

"Certainly not. Why should I look at the letter? My word goes

for nothing. I have done what I could, but in vain. Now let us see how you will manage it yourself."

The bishop did not pass a comfortable night; but in the morning his wife did read his letter, and after that things went a little smoother with him. She was pleased to say that, considering all things; seeing, as she could not help seeing, that the matter had been dreadfully mismanaged, and that great weakness had been displayed;—seeing that these faults had already been committed, perhaps no better step could now be taken than that proposed in the letter.

"I suppose he will not come," said the bishop.

"I think he will," said Mrs. Proudie, "and I trust that we may be able to convince him that obedience will be his best course. He will be more humble-minded here than at Hogglestock." In saying this the lady showed some knowledge of the general nature of clergymen and of the world at large. She understood how much louder a cock can crow in its own farmyard than elsewhere, and knew that episcopal authority, backed by all the solemn awe of palatial grandeur, goes much further than it will do when sent under the folds of an ordinary envelope. But though she understood ordinary human nature, it may be that she did not understand Mr. Crawley's nature.

But she was at any rate right in her idea as to Mr. Crawley's immediate reply. The palace groom who rode over to Hogglestock returned with an immediate answer.

"My Lord"—said Mr. Crawley.

"I will obey your lordship's summons, and, unless impediments should arise, I will wait upon your lordship at the hour you name to-morrow. I will not trespass on your hospitality. For myself, I rarely break bread in any house but my own; and as to the horse, I have none.

"I have the honour to be,

"My lord, &c. &c.,

"Josiah Crawley."

"Of course I shall go," he had said to his wife as soon as he had had time to read the letter, and make known to her the contents. "I shall go if it be possible for me to get there. I think that I am bound to comply with the bishop's wishes in so much as that."

"But how will you get there, Josiah?"

"I will walk,—with the Lord's aid."

Now Hogglestock was fifteen miles from Barchester, and Mr. Crawley

was, as his wife well knew, by no means fitted in his present state for great physical exertion. But from the tone in which he had replied to her, she well knew that it would not avail for her to remonstrate at the moment. He had walked more than thirty miles in a day since they had been living at Hogglestock, and she did not doubt but that it might be possible for him to do it again. Any scheme, which she might be able to devise for saving him from so terrible a journey in the middle of winter, must be pondered over silently, and brought to bear, if not slyly, at least deftly, and without discussion. She made no reply therefore when he declared that on the following day he would walk to Barchester and back,—with the Lord's aid; nor did she see, or ask to see the note which he sent to the bishop. When the messenger was gone, Mr. Crawley was all alert, looking forward with evident glee to his encounter with the bishop,—snorting like a racehorse at the expected triumph of the coming struggle. And he read much Greek with Jane on that afternoon, pouring into her young ears, almost with joyous rapture, his appreciation of the glory and the pathos and the humanity, as also of the awful tragedy, of the story of Œdipus. His very soul was on fire at the idea of clutching the weak bishop in his hand, and crushing him with his strong grasp.

In the afternoon Mrs. Crawley slipped out to a neighbouring farmer's wife, and returned in an hour's time with a little story which she did not tell with any appearance of eager satisfaction. She had learned well what were the little tricks necessary to the carrying of such a matter as that which she had now in hand. Mr. Mangle, the farmer, as it happened, was going to-morrow morning in his tax-cart as far as Framley Mill, and would be delighted if Mr. Crawley would take a seat. He must remain at Framley the best part of the afternoon, and hoped that Mr. Crawley would take a seat back again. Now Framley Mill was only half a mile off the direct road to Barchester, and was almost half way from Hogglestock parsonage to the city. This would, at any rate, bring the walk within a practicable distance. Mr. Crawley was instantly placed upon his guard, like an animal that sees the bait and suspects the trap. Had he been told that farmer Mangle was going all the way to Barchester, nothing would have induced him to get into the cart. He would have felt sure that farmer Mangle had been persuaded to pity him in his poverty and his strait, and he would sooner have started to walk to London than have put a foot upon the step of the cart. But this lift half way did look to him as though it were really fortuitous. His wife could hardly have been cunning enough to persuade the farmer to go to Framley, conscious that the trap would have

been suspected had the bait been made more full. But I fear,—I fear the dear good woman had been thus cunning,—had understood how far the trap might be baited, and had thus succeeded in catching her prey.

On the following morning he consented to get into farmer Mangle's cart, and was driven as far as Framley Mill. "I wouldn't think nowt, your reverence, of running you over into Barchester,—that I wouldn't. The powny is so mortial good," said farmer Mangle in his foolish good-nature.

"And how about your business here?" said Mr. Crawley. The farmer scratched his head, remembering all Mrs. Crawley's injunctions, and awkwardly acknowledged that to be sure his own business with the miller was very pressing. Then Mr. Crawley descended, terribly suspicious, and went on his journey.

"Anyways, your reverence will call for me coming back?" said farmer Mangle. But Mr. Crawley would make no promise. He bade the farmer not wait for him. If they chanced to meet together on the road he might get up again. If the man really had business at Framley, how could he have offered to go on to Barchester? Were they deceiving him? The wife of his bosom had deceived him in such matters before now. But his trouble in this respect was soon dissipated by the pride of his anticipated triumph over the bishop. He took great glory from the thought that he would go before the bishop with dirty boots,—with boots necessarily dirty,—with rusty pantaloons, that he would be hot and mud-stained with his walk, hungry, and an object to be wondered at by all who should see him, because of the misfortunes which had been unworthily heaped upon his head; whereas the bishop would be sleek and clean and well-fed,—pretty with all the prettinesses that are becoming to a bishop's outward man. And he, Mr. Crawley, would be humble, whereas the bishop would be very proud. And the bishop would be in his own arm-chair,—the cock in his own farmyard, while he, Mr. Crawley, would be seated afar off, in the cold extremity of the room, with nothing of outward circumstances to assist him,—a man called thither to undergo censure. And yet he would take the bishop in his grasp and crush him,—crush him,—crush him! As he thought of this he walked quickly through the mud, and put out his long arm and his great hand, far before him out into the air, and, there and then, he crushed the bishop in his imagination. Yes, indeed! He thought it very doubtful whether the bishop would ever send for him a second time. As all this passed through his mind, he forgot his wife's cunning, and farmer Mangle's sin, and for the moment he was happy.

As he turned a corner round by Lord Lufton's park paling, who should he meet but his old friend Mr. Robarts, the parson of Framley,—the parson who had committed the sin of being bail for him,—the sin, that is, according to Mrs. Proudie's view of the matter. He was walking with his hand still stretched out,—still crushing the bishop, when Mr. Robarts was close upon him.

"What, Crawley! upon my word I am very glad to see you; you are coming up to me, of course?"

"Thank you, Mr. Robarts; no, not to-day. The bishop has summoned me to his presence, and I am on my road to Barchester.

"But how are you going?"

"I shall walk."

"Walk to Barchester. Impossible!"

"I hope not quite impossible, Mr. Robarts. I trust I shall get as far before two o'clock; but to do so I must be on my road." Then he showed signs of a desire to go on upon his way without further parley.

"But, Crawley, do let me send you over. There is the horse and gig doing nothing."

"Thank you, Mr. Robarts; no. I should prefer the walk to-day."

"And you have walked from Hogglestock?"

"No;—not so. A neighbour coming hither, who happened to have business at your mill,—he brought me so far in his cart. The walk home will be nothing,—nothing. I shall enjoy it. Good morning, Mr. Robarts."

But Mr. Robarts thought of the dirty road, and of the bishop's presence, and of his own ideas of what would be becoming for a clergyman,—and persevered. "You will find the lanes so very muddy; and our bishop, you know, is apt to notice such things. Do be persuaded."

"Notice what things?" demanded Mr. Crawley, in an indignant tone.

"He, or perhaps she rather, will say how dirty your shoes were when you came to the palace."

"If he, or she, can find nothing unclean about me but my shoes, let them say their worst. I shall be very indifferent. I have long ceased, Mr. Robarts, to care much what any man or woman may say about my shoes. Good morning." Then he stalked on, clutching and crushing in his hand the bishop, and the bishop's wife, and the whole diocese,—and all the Church of England. Dirty shoes, indeed! Whose was the fault that there were in the church so many feet soiled by unmerited poverty, and so many hands soiled by undeserved wealth? If the bishop did not like his shoes, let the bishop dare to tell him so! So

he walked on through the thick of the mud, by no means picking his way.

He walked fast, and he found himself in the close half an hour before the time named by the bishop. But on no account would he have rung the palace bell one minute before two o'clock. So he walked up and down under the towers of the cathedral, and cooled himself, and looked up at the pleasant plate-glass in the windows of the house of his friend the dean, and told himself how, in their college days, he and the dean had been quite equal,—quite equal, except that by the voices of all qualified judges in the university, he, Mr. Crawley, had been acknowledged to be the riper scholar. And now the Mr. Arabin of those days was Dean of Barchester,—travelling abroad luxuriously at this moment for his delight, while he, Crawley, was perpetual curate at Hogglestock, and had now walked into Barchester at the command of the bishop, because he was suspected of having stolen twenty pounds! When he had fully imbued his mind with the injustice of all this, his time was up, and he walked boldly to the bishop's gate, and boldly rang the bishop's bell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BISHOP OF BARCHESTER IS CRUSHED.

Who inquires why it is that a little greased flour rubbed in among the hair on a footman's head,—just one dab here and another there,—gives such a tone of high life to the family? And seeing that the thing is so easily done, why do not more people attempt it? The tax on hair-powder is but thirteen shillings a year. It may, indeed, be that the slightest dab in the world justifies the wearer in demanding hot meat three times a day, and wine at any rate on Sundays. I think, however, that a bishop's wife may enjoy the privilege without such heavy attendant expense; otherwise the man who opened the bishop's door to Mr. Crawley would hardly have been so ornamented.

The man asked for a card. "My name is Mr. Crawley," said our friend. "The bishop has desired me to come to him at this hour. Will you be pleased to tell him that I am here." The man again asked for a card. "I am not bound to carry with me my name printed on a ticket," said Mr. Crawley. "If you cannot remember it, give me pen and paper, and I will write it." The servant, somewhat awed by the

stranger's manner, brought the pen and paper, and Mr. Crawley wrote his name :—

"The Rev. Joshua Crawley, M. A.,
Perpetual Curate of Hogglestock."

He was then ushered into a waiting-room, but, to his disappointment, was not kept there waiting long. Within three minutes he was ushered into the bishop's study, and into the presence of the two great luminaries of the diocese. He was at first somewhat disconcerted by finding Mrs. Proudie in the room. In the imaginary conversation with the bishop which he had been preparing on the road, he had conceived that the bishop would be attended by a chaplain, and he had suited his words to the joint discomfiture of the bishop and of the lower clergyman ;—but now the line of his battle must be altered. This was no doubt an injury, but he trusted to his courage and readiness to enable him to surmount it. He had left his hat behind him in the waiting-room, but he kept his old short cloak still upon his shoulders ; and when he entered the bishop's room his hands and arms were hid beneath it. There was something lowly in this constrained gait. It showed at least that he had no idea of being asked to shake hands with the august persons he might meet. And his head was somewhat bowed, though his great, bald, broad forehead showed itself so prominent, that neither the bishop nor Mrs. Proudie could drop it from their sight during the whole interview. He was a man who when seen could hardly be forgotten. The deep angry remonstrant eyes, the shaggy eyebrows, telling tales of frequent anger,—of anger frequent but generally silent,—the repressed indignation of the habitual frown, the long nose and large powerful mouth, the deep furrows on the cheek, and the general look of thought and suffering, all combined to make the appearance of the man remarkable, and to describe to the beholders at once his true character. No one ever on seeing Mr. Crawley took him to be a happy man, or a weak man, or an ignorant man, or a wise man.

"You are very punctual, Mr. Crawley," said the bishop. Mr. Crawley simply bowed his head, still keeping his hands beneath his cloak. "Will you not take a chair nearer to the fire ?" Mr. Crawley had not seated himself, but had placed himself in front of a chair at the extreme end of the room,—resolved that he would not use it unless he were duly asked.

"Thank you, my lord," he said, "I am warm with walking, and, if you please, will avoid the fire."

"You have not walked, Mr. Crawley ?"

"Yes, my lord. I have been walking."

"Not from Hogglestock!"

Now this was a matter which Mr. Crawley certainly did not mean to discuss with the bishop. It might be well for the bishop to demand his presence in the palace, but it could be no part of the bishop's duty to inquire how he got there. "That, my lord, is a matter of no moment," said he. "I am glad at any rate that I have been enabled to obey your lordship's order in coming hither on this morning.'

Hitherto Mrs. Proudie had not said a word. She stood back in the room, near the fire,—more backward a good deal than she was accustomed to do when clergymen made their ordinary visits. On such occasions she would come forward and shake hands with them graciously, —graciously even, if proudly; but she had felt that she must do nothing of that kind now; there must be no shaking hands with a man who had stolen a cheque for twenty pounds! It might probably be necessary to keep Mr. Crawley at a distance, and therefore she had remained in the background. But Mr. Crawley seemed to be disposed to keep himself in the background, and therefore she could speak. "I hope your wife and children are well, Mr. Crawley," she said.

"Thank you, madam, my children are well, and Mrs. Crawley suffers no special ailment at present."

"That is much to be thankful for, Mr. Crawley." Whether he were or were not thankful for such mercies as these was no business of the bishop or of the bishop's wife. That was between him and his God. So he would not even bow to this civility, but sat with his head erect, and with a great frown on his heavy brow.

Then the bishop rose from his chair to speak, intending to take up a position on the rug. But as he did so Mr. Crawley, who had seated himself on an intimation that he was expected to sit down, rose also, and the bishop found that he would thus lose his expected vantage. "Will you not be seated, Mr. Crawley?" said the bishop. Mr. Crawley smiled, but stood his ground. Then the bishop returned to his arm-chair, and Mr. Crawley also sat down again. "Mr. Crawley," began the bishop, "this matter which came the other day before the magistrates at Silverbridge has been a most unfortunate affair. It has given me, I can assure you, the most sincere pain."

Mr. Crawley had made up his mind how far the bishop should be allowed to go without a rebuke. He had told himself that it would only be natural, and would not be unbecoming, that the bishop should allude to the meeting of the magistrates and to the alleged theft, and that therefore such allusion should be endured with patient humility. And, moreover, the more rope he gave the bishop, the more likely the bishop

would be to entangle himself. It certainly was Mr. Crawley's wish that the bishop should entangle himself. He, therefore, replied very meekly, "It has been most unfortunate, my lord."

"I have felt for Mrs. Crawley very deeply," said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had now made up his mind that as long as it was possible he would ignore the presence of Mrs. Proudie altogether; and, therefore, he made no sign that he had heard the latter remark.

"It has been most unfortunate," continued the bishop. "I have never before had a clergyman in my diocese placed in so distressing a position."

"That is a matter of opinion, my lord," said Mr. Crawley, who at that moment thought of a crisis which had come in the life of another clergyman in the diocese of Barchester, with the circumstances of which he had by chance been made acquainted.

"Exactly," said the bishop. "And I am expressing my opinion." Mr. Crawley, who understood fighting, did not think that the time had yet come for striking a blow, so he simply bowed again. "A most unfortunate position, Mr. Crawley," continued the bishop. "Far be it from me to express an opinion upon the matter, which will have to come before a jury of your countrymen. It is enough for me to know that the magistrates assembled at Silverbridge, gentlemen to whom no doubt you must be known, as most of them live in your neighbourhood, have heard evidence upon the subject ——"

"Most convincing evidence," said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband. Mr. Crawley's black brow became a little blacker as he heard the word, but still he ignored the woman. He not only did not speak, but did not turn his eye upon her.

"They have heard the evidence on the subject," continued the bishop, "and they have thought it proper to refer the decision as to your innocence or your guilt to a jury of your countrymen."

"And they were right," said Mr. Crawley.

"Very possibly. I don't deny it. Probably," said the bishop, whose eloquence was somewhat disturbed by Mr. Crawley's ready acquiescence.

"Of course they were right," said Mrs. Proudie.

"At any rate it is so," said the bishop. "You are in the position of a man amenable to the criminal laws of the land."

"There are no criminal laws, my lord," said Mr. Crawley; "but to such laws as there are we are all amenable,—your lordship and I alike."

"But you are so in a very particular way. I do not wish to remind

you what might be your condition now, but for the interposition of private friends."

"I should be in the condition of a man not guilty before the law; —guiltless, as far as the law goes,—but kept in durance, not for faults of his own, but because otherwise, by reason of laches in the police, his presence at the assizes might not be ensured. In such a position a man's reputation is made to hang for awhile on the trust which some friends or neighbours may have in it. I do not say that the test is a good one."

"You would have been put in prison, Mr. Crawley, because the magistrates were of opinion that you had taken Mr. Soames's cheque," said Mrs. Proudie. On this occasion he did look at her. He turned one glance upon her from under his eyebrows, but he did not speak.

"With all that I have nothing to do," said the bishop.

"Nothing whatever, my lord," said Mr. Crawley.

"But, bishop, I think that you have," said Mrs. Proudie. "The judgment formed by the magistrates as to the conduct of one of your clergymen makes it imperative upon you to act in the matter."

"Yes, my dear, yes; I am coming to that. What Mrs. Proudie says is perfectly true. I have been constrained most unwillingly to take action in this matter. It is undoubtedly the fact that you must at the next assizes surrender yourself at the court-house yonder, to be tried for this offence against the laws."

"That is true. If I be alive, my lord, and have strength sufficient, I shall be there."

"You must be there," said Mrs. Proudie. "The police will look to that, Mr. Crawley." She was becoming very angry in that the man would not answer her a word. On this occasion again he did not even look at her.

"Yes; you will be there," said the bishop. "Now that is, to say the least of it, an unseemly position for a beneficed clergyman."

"You said before, my lord, that it was an unfortunate position, and the word, methinks, was better chosen."

"It is very unseemly, very unseemly indeed," said Mrs. Proudie; "nothing could possibly be more unseemly. The bishop might very properly have used a much stronger word."

"Under these circumstances," continued the bishop, "looking to the welfare of your parish, to the welfare of the diocese, and allow me to say, Mr. Crawley, to the welfare of yourself also ——"

"And especially to the souls of the people," said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop shook his head. It is hard to be impressively

eloquent when one is interrupted at every best turned period, even by a supporting voice. "Yes;—and looking of course to the religious interests of your people, Mr. Crawley, I came to the conclusion that it would be expedient that you should cease your ministrations for awhile." The bishop paused, and Mr. Crawley bowed his head. "I, therefore, sent over to you a gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, Mr. Thumble, with a letter from myself, in which I endeavoured to impress upon you, without the use of any severe language, what my convictions were."

"Severe words are often the best mercy," said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had raised his hand, with his finger out, preparatory to answering the bishop. But as Mrs. Proudie had spoken he dropped his finger and was silent.

"Mr. Thumble brought me back your written reply," continued the bishop, "by which I was grieved to find that you were not willing to submit yourself to my counsel in the matter."

"I was most unwilling, my lord. Submission to authority is at times a duty;—and at times opposition to authority is a duty also."

"Opposition to just authority cannot be a duty, Mr. Crawley."

"Opposition to usurped authority is an imperative duty," said Mr. Crawley.

"And who is to be the judge?" demanded Mrs. Proudie. Then there was silence for a while; when, as Mr. Crawley made no reply, the lady repeated her question. "Will you be pleased to answer my question, sir? Who, in such a case, is to be the judge?" But Mr. Crawley did not please to answer her question. "The man is obstinate," said Mrs. Proudie.

"I had better proceed," said the bishop. "Mr. Thumble brought me back your reply, which grieved me greatly."

"It was contumacious and indecent," said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop again shook his head and looked so unutterably miserable that a smile came across Mr. Crawley's face. After all, others besides himself had their troubles and trials. Mrs. Proudie saw and understood the smile, and became more angry than ever. She drew her chair close to the table, and began to fidget with her fingers among the papers. She had never before encountered a clergyman so contumacious, so indecent, so unreverend,—so upsetting. She had had to do with men difficult to manage;—the archdeacon for instance; but the archdeacon had never been so impertinent to her as this man. She had quarrelled once openly with a chaplain of her husband's, a clergyman whom she herself had introduced to her husband, and who

had treated her very badly;—but not so badly, not with such unscrupulous violence, as she was now encountering from this ill-clothed beggarly man, this perpetual curate, with his dirty broken boots, this already half-convicted thief! Such was her idea of Mr. Crawley's conduct to her, while she was fingering the papers,—simply because Mr. Crawley would not speak to her.

"I forget where I was," said the bishop. "Oh. Mr. Thumble came back, and I received your letter;—of course I received it. And I was surprised to learn from that, that in spite of what had occurred at Silverbridge, you were still anxious to continue the usual Sunday ministrations in your church."

"I was determined that I would do my duty at Hogglestock, as long as I might be left there to do it," said Mr. Crawley.

"Duty!" said Mrs Proudie.

"Just a moment, my dear," said the bishop. "When Sunday came, I had no alternative but to send Mr. Thumble over again to Hogglestock. It occurred to us,—to me and Mrs. Proudie,—"

"I will tell Mr. Crawley just now what has occurred to me," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Yes;—just so. And I am sure that he will take it in good part. It occurred to me, Mr. Crawley, that your first letter might have been written in haste."

"It was written in haste, my lord; your messenger was waiting."

"Yes;—just so. Well; so I sent him again, hoping that he might be accepted as a messenger of peace. It was a most disagreeable mission for any gentleman, Mr. Crawley."

"Most disagreeable, my lord."

"And you refused him permission to obey the instructions which I had given him! You would not let him read from your desk, or preach from your pulpit."

"Had I been Mr. Thumble," said Mrs. Proudie, "I would have read from that desk and I would have preached from that pulpit."

Mr. Crawley waited a moment, thinking that the bishop might perhaps speak again; but as he did not, but sat expectant as though he had finished his discourse, and now expected a reply, Mr. Crawley got up from his seat and drew near to the table. "My lord," he began, "it has all been just as you have said. I did answer your first letter in haste."

"The more shame for you," said Mrs. Proudie.

"And therefore, for aught I know, my letter to your lordship may be so worded as to need some apology."

"Of course it needs an apology," said Mrs Proudie.

"But for the matter of it, my lord, no apology can be made, nor is any needed. I did refuse to your messenger permission to perform the services of my church, and if you send twenty more, I shall refuse them all,—till the time may come when it will be your lordship's duty, in accordance with the laws of the Church,—as borne out and backed by the laws of the land, to provide during my constrained absence for the spiritual wants of those poor people at Hogglestock."

"Poor people, indeed," said Mrs. Proudie. "Poor wretches!"

"And, my lord, it may well be, that it shall soon be your lordship's duty to take due and legal steps for depriving me of my benefice at Hogglestock;—nay, probably, for silencing me altogether as to the exercise of my sacred profession!"

"Of course it will, sir. Your gown will be taken from you," said Mrs. Proudie. The bishop was looking with all his eyes up at the great forehead and great eyebrows of the man, and was so fascinated by the power that was exercised over him by the other man's strength that he hardly now noticed his wife.

"It may well be so," continued Mr. Crawley. "The circumstances are strong against me; and, though your lordship has altogether misunderstood the nature of the duty performed by the magistrates in sending my case for trial,—although, as it seems to me, you have come to conclusions in this matter in ignorance of the very theory of our laws,——"

"Sir!" said Mrs. Proudie.

"Yet I can foresee the probability that a jury may discover me to have been guilty of theft."

"Of course the jury will do so," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Should such verdict be given, then, my lord, your interference will be legal, proper, and necessary. And you will find that, even if it be within my power to oppose obstacles to your lordship's authority, I will oppose no such obstacle. There is, I believe, no appeal in criminal cases."

"None at all," said Mrs. Proudie. "There is no appeal against your bishop. You should have learned that before."

"But till that time shall come, my lord, I shall hold my own at Hogglestock as you hold your own here at Barchester. Nor have you more power to turn me out of my pulpit by your mere voice, than I have to turn you out of your throne by mine. If you doubt me, my lord, your lordship's ecclesiastical court is open to you. Try it there."

"You defy us, then?" said Mrs. Proudie.

"My lord, I grant your authority as bishop to be great, but even a bishop can only act as the law allows him."

"God forbid that I should do more," said the bishop.

"Sir, you will find that your wicked threats will fall back upon your own head," said Mrs. Proudie.

"Peace, woman," Mr. Crawley said, addressing her at last. The bishop jumped out of his chair at hearing the wife of his bosom called a woman. But he jumped rather in admiration than in anger. He had already begun to perceive that Mr. Crawley was a man who had better be left to take care of the souls at Hogglestock, at any rate till the trial should come on.

"Woman!" said Mrs. Proudie, rising to her feet as though she really intended some personal encounter.

"Madam," said Mr. Crawley, "you should not interfere in these matters. You simply debase your husband's high office. The distaff were more fitting for you. My lord, good morning." And before either of them could speak again, he was out of the room, and through the hall, and beyond the gate, and standing beneath the towers of the cathedral. Yes, he had, he thought, in truth crushed the bishop. He had succeeded in crumpling the bishop up within the clutch of his fist.

He started in a spirit of triumph to walk back on his road towards Hogglestock. He did not think of the long distance before him for the first hour of his journey. He had had his victory, and the remembrance of that braced his nerves and gave elasticity to his sinews, and he went stalking along the road with rapid strides, muttering to himself from time to time as he went along some word about Mrs. Proudie and her distaff. Mr. Thumble would not, he thought, come to him again,—not, at any rate, till the assizes were drawing near. And he had resolved what he would do then. When the day of his trial was near, he would himself write to the bishop, and beg that provision might be made for his church, in the event of the verdict going against him. His friend, Dean Arabin, was to be home before that time, and the idea had occurred to him of asking the dean to see to this; but now the other would be the more independent course, and the better. And there was a matter as to which he was not altogether well pleased with the dean, although he was so conscious of his own peculiarities as to know that he could hardly trust himself for a judgment. But, at any rate, he would apply to the bishop,—to the bishop whom he had just left prostrate in his palace,—when the time of his trial should be close at hand.

Full of such thoughts as these he went along almost gaily, nor felt the fatigue of the road till he had covered the first five miles out of Barchester. It was nearly four o'clock, and the thick gloom of the winter evening was making itself felt. And then he began to be

fatigued. He had not as yet eaten since he had left his home in the morning, and he now pulled a crust out of his pocket and leaned against a gate as he crunched it. There were still ten miles before him, and he knew that such an addition to the work he had already done would task him very severely. Farmer Mangle had told him that he would not leave Framley Mill till five, and he had got time to reach Framley Mill by that time. But he had said that he would not return to Framley Mill, and he remembered his suspicion that his wife and farmer Mangle between them had cozened him. No; he would persevere and walk,—walk, though he should drop upon the road. He was now nearer fifty than forty years of age, and hardships as well as time had told upon him. He knew that though his strength was good for the commencement of a hard day's work, it would not hold out for him as it used to do. He knew that the last four miles in the dark night would be very sad with him. But still he persevered, endeavouring, as he went, to cherish himself with the remembrance of his triumph.

He passed the turning going down to Framley with courage, but when he came to the further turning, by which the cart would return from Framley to the Hogglestock road, he looked wistfully down the road for farmer Mangle. But farmer Mangle was still at the mill, waiting in expectation that Mr. Crawley might come to him. But the poor traveller paused here barely for a minute, and then went on, stumbling through the mud, striking his ill-covered feet against the rough stones in the dark, sweating in his weakness, almost tottering at times, and calculating whether his remaining strength would serve to carry him home. He had almost forgotten the bishop and his wife before at last he grasped the wicket gate leading to his own door.

"Oh, mamma, here is papa!"

"But where is the cart? I did not hear the wheels," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Oh, mamma, I think papa is ill." Then the wife took her drooping husband by both arms and strove to look him in the face. "He has walked all the way, and he is ill," said Jane.

"No, my dear, I am very tired, but not ill. Let me sit down, and give me some bread and tea, and I shall recover myself." Then Mrs. Crawley, from some secret hoard, got him a small modicum of spirits, and gave him meat and tea, and he was docile; and, obeying her behests, allowed himself to be taken to his bed.

"I do not think the bishop will send for me again," he said, as she tucked the clothes around him.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

When Christmas morning came no emissary from the bishop appeared at Hogglestock to interfere with the ordinary performance of the day's services. "I think we need fear no further disturbance," Mr. Crawley said to his wife,—and there was no further disturbance.

On the day after his walk from Framley to Barchester, and from Barchester back to Hogglestock, Mr. Crawley had risen not much the worse for his labour, and had gradually given to his wife a full account of what had taken place. "A poor weak man," he said, speaking of the bishop. "A poor weak creature, and much to be pitied."

"I have always heard that she is a violent woman."

"Very violent, and very ignorant; and most intrusive withal."

"And you did not answer her a word?"

"At last my forbearance with her broke down, and I bade her mind her distaff."

"What;—really? Did you say those words to her?"

"Nay; as for my exact words I cannot remember them. I was thinking more of the words with which it might be fitting that I should answer the bishop. But I certainly told her that she had better mind her distaff."

"And how did she behave then?"

"I did not wait to see. The bishop had spoken, and I had replied; and why should I tarry to behold the woman's violence? I had told him that he was wrong in law, and that I at least would not submit to usurped authority. There was nothing to keep me longer, and so I went without much ceremony of leave-taking. There had been little ceremony of greeting on their part, and there was less in the making of adieux on mine. They had told me that I was a thief ——"

"No, Josiah,—surely not so? They did not use that very word?"

"I say they did;—they did use the very word. But stop. I am wrong. I wrong his lordship, and I crave pardon for having done so. If my memory serve me, no expression so harsh escaped from the bishop's mouth. He gave me, indeed, to understand more than once that the action taken by the magistrates was tantamount to a conviction, and that I must be guilty because they had decided that there

was evidence sufficient to justify a trial. But all that arose from my lord's ignorance of the administration of the laws of his country. He was very ignorant,—puzzle-pated, as you may call it,—led by the nose by his wife, weak as water, timid, and vacillating. But he did not wish, I think, to be insolent. It was Mrs. Proudie who told me to my face that I was a—thief."

"May she be punished for the cruel word!" said Mrs. Crawley. "May the remembrance that she has spoken it come, some day, heavily upon her heart!"

"'Vengeance is mine. I will repay,' saith the Lord," answered Mr. Crawley. "We may safely leave all that alone, and rid our minds of such wishes, if it be possible. It is well, I think, that violent offences, when committed, should be met by instant rebuke. To turn the other cheek instantly to the smiter can hardly be suitable in these days, when the hands of so many are raised to strike. But the return blow should be given only while the smart remains. She hurt me then; but what is it to me now, that she called me a thief to my face? Do I not know that, all the country round, men and women are calling me the same behind my back?"

"No, Josiah, you do not know that. They say that the thing is very strange,—so strange that it requires a trial; but no one thinks you have taken that which was not your own."

"I think I did. I myself think I took that which was not my own. My poor head suffers so;—so many grievous thoughts distract me, that I am like a child, and know not what I do." As he spoke thus he put both hands up to his head, leaning forward as though in anxious thought,—as though he were striving to bring his mind to bear with accuracy upon past events. "It could not have been mine, and yet ——" Then he sat silent, and made no effort to continue his speech.

"And yet?"—said his wife, encouraging him to proceed. If she could only learn the real truth, she thought that she might perhaps yet save him, with assistance from their friends.

"When I said that I had gotten it from that man I must have been mad."

"From which man, love?"

"From the man Soames,—he who accuses me. And yet, as the Lord hears me, I thought so then. The truth is, that there are times when I am not—sane. I am not a thief,—not before God; but I am —mad at times." These last words he spoke very slowly, in a whisper,—without any excitement,—indeed with a composure which

was horrible to witness. And what he said was the more terrible because she was so well convinced of the truth of his words. Of course he was no thief. She wanted no one to tell her that. As he himself had expressed it, he was no thief before God, however the money might have come into his possession. That there were times when his reason, once so fine and clear, could not act, could not be trusted to guide him right, she had gradually come to know with fear and trembling. But he himself had never before hinted his own consciousness of this calamity. Indeed he had been so unwilling to speak of himself and of his own state, that she had been unable even to ask him a question about the money,—lest he should suspect that she suspected him. Now he was speaking,—but speaking with such heartrending sadness that she could hardly urge him to go on.

"You have sometimes been ill, Josiah, as any of us may be," she said, "and that has been the cause."

"There are different kinds of sickness. There is sickness of the body, and sickness of the heart, and sickness of the spirit;—and then there is sickness of the mind, the worst of all."

"With you, Josiah, it has chiefly been the first."

"With me, Mary, it has been all of them,—every one! My spirit is broken, and my mind has not been able to keep its even tenour amidst the ruins. But I will strive. I will strive. I will strive still. And if God helps me, I will prevail." Then he took up his hat and cloak, and went forth among the lanes; and on this occasion his wife was glad that he should go alone.

This occurred a day or two before Christmas, and Mrs. Crawley during those days said nothing more to her husband on the subject which he had so unexpectedly discussed. She asked him no questions about the money, or as to the possibility of his exercising his memory, nor did she counsel him to plead that the false excuses given by him for his possession of the cheque had been occasioned by the sad slip to which sorrow had in those days subjected his memory and his intellect. But the matter had always been on her mind. Might it not be her paramount duty to do something of this at the present moment? Might it not be that his acquittal or conviction would depend on what she might now learn from him? It was clear to her that he was brighter in spirit since his encounter with the Proudies than he had ever been since the accusation had been first made against him. And she knew well that his present mood would not be of long continuance. He would fall again into his moody silent ways, and then the chance of learning aught from him would be past, and perhaps, for ever.

He performed the Christmas services with nothing of special despondency in his tone or manner, and his wife thought that she had never heard him give the sacrament with more impressive dignity. After the service he stood awhile at the churchyard gate, and exchanged a word of courtesy as to the season with such of the families of the farmers as had stayed for the Lord's supper.

"I waited at Framley for your reverence till arter six,—so I did," said farmer Mangle.

"I kept the road, and walked the whole way," said Mr. Crawley. "I think I told you that I should not return to the mill. But I am not the less obliged by your great kindness."

"Say nowt o' that," said the farmer. "No doubt I had business at the mill,—lots to do at the mill." Nor did he think that the fib he was telling was at all incompatible with the Holy Sacrament in which he had just taken a part.

The Christmas dinner at the parsonage was not a repast that did much honour to the season, but it was a better dinner than the inhabitants of that house usually saw on the board before them. There was roast pork and mince-pies, and a bottle of wine. As Mrs. Crawley with her own hand put the meat upon the table, and then, as was her custom in their house, proceeded to cut it up, she looked at her husband's face to see whether he was scrutinizing the food with painful eye. It was better that she should tell the truth at once than that she should be made to tell it, in answer to a question. Everything on the table, except the bread and potatoes, had come in a basket from Framley Court. Pork had been sent instead of beef, because people in the country, when they kill their pigs, do sometimes give each other pork,—but do not exchange joints of beef, when they slay their oxen. All this was understood by Mrs. Crawley, but she almost wished that beef had been sent, because beef would have attracted less attention. He said, however, nothing to the meat; but when his wife proposed to him that he should eat a mince-pie he resented it. "The bare food," said he, "is bitter enough, coming, as it does; but that would choke me." She did not press it, but eat one herself, as otherwise her girl would have been forced also to refuse the dainty.

That evening, as soon as Jane was in bed, she resolved to ask him some further questions. "You will have a lawyer, Josiah,—will you not?" she said.

"Why should I have a lawyer?"

"Because he will know what questions to ask, and how questions on the other side should be answered."

"I have no questions to ask, and there is only one way in which questions should be answered. I have no money to pay a lawyer."

"But, Josiah, in such a case as this, where your honour, and our very life depend upon it—"

"Depend on what?"

"On your acquittal."

"I shall not be acquitted. It is as well to look it in the face at once. Lawyer, or no lawyer, they will say that I took the money. Were I upon the jury, trying the case myself, knowing all that I know now,"—and as he said this he struck forth with his hands into the air,—"I think that I should say so myself. A lawyer will do no good. It is here. It is here." And again he put his hands up to his head.

So far she had been successful. At this moment it had in truth been her object to induce him to speak of his own memory, and not of the aid that a lawyer might give. The proposition of the lawyer had been brought in to introduce the subject.

"But, Josiah,—"

"Well?"

It was very hard for her to speak. She could not bear to torment him by any allusion to his own deficiencies. She could not endure to make him think that she suspected him of any frailty either in intellect or thought. Wifelike, she desired to worship him, and that he should know that she worshipped him. But if a word might save him! "Josiah, where did it come from?"

"Yes," said he; "yes; that is the question. Where did it come from?"—and he turned sharp upon her, looking at her with all the power of his eyes. "It is because I cannot tell you where it came from that I ought to be,—either in Bedlam, as a madman, or in the county gaol as a thief." The words were so dreadful to her that she could not utter at the moment another syllable. "How is a man—to think himself—fit—for a man's work, when he cannot answer his wife such a plain question as that?" Then he paused again. "They should take me to Bedlam at once,—at once,—at once. That would not disgrace the children as the gaol will do."

Mrs. Crawley could ask no further questions on that evening.

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